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FICTION SUPPLEMENT.

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SOCIAL STUDIES.

Quinneys. By H. A. Vachell. (John Murray, 6s.)

IN the character of Joe Quinney, dealer in antiques, Mr. Vachell has selected a curious object of study, and one somewhat out of the ordinary run of portraits in fiction.

The son of a curio dealer and, as the opening chapter tells us, heir to the business, Quinney learnt early in life that few people can distinguish between the genuine and the spurious, and set himself to become an expert. Unlike his father, who had merely thought of his collections in terms of profit, Quinney possessed an inborn feeling for beauty and a hatred of rubbish. His instinctive genius for selection was equally marked in his choice of a wife. Susan was a woman both of charm and sense, with a natural detestation of her husband's absorption in his "sticks and stones."

Quinney, however, was not destined to become, as at one time seemed likely, merely an inhuman devotee of the antique so long as his daughter Posy was there—a presence that had no intention of being put by. Like her mother, she preferred "persons" to "things," but, unlike her, she possessed sufficient force of character to make her father respect her attitude.

To him she was the gem of his collection, and happily for both he makes this discovery in time to prevent Posy mistaking a sentimental attraction for a romantic affection.

In opening her eyes to the true nature of the scamp who has taken her fancy, Quinney finds out that his curios, after all, rank second to his wife and daughter.

Mr. Vachell has really no one but himself to blame if, after the uncanny knowledge he displays of the "fakes" and dodges in the antique dealer's trade, he finds himself deluged with petitions for advice and assistance from those who would like to feel sure that this time they have got hold of "a good thing." He claims for his book that it is a "veracious chronicle"—a claim which the reviewer, not an expert in old china and furniture, does not dispute. Mr. Vachell has certainly earned the thanks of the public for enlightening their ignorance in so thoroughly readable a way.

Shop Girls. By Arthur Applin. (Mills & Boon, 6s.)

MR. APPLIN has written a remarkably clever, but extremely improbable story. We like everything but the conclusion, which is so unconvincing that it mars what otherwise might have been an admirable book. The principal character is a Mr. Lobb, a superman of commerce and the new universal provider, who regards both the world and its workers as so much raw material designed to contribute to his power and wealth. In the great emporium where he rules like an absolute monarch he treats his staff as an engineer treats a complicated piece of machinery. His philosophy elevates order to a divine science, while he regards humanity as a kind of superfluous abstraction. Lobb is the apotheosis of success, the commercial melting-pot which eats up life like a destroying pestilence. Into the vortex of the stores comes a girl who refuses to bow to his will, and then, when we prepare for what should be the logical ending, the book disappoints us.

The Marriage Tie. By Wilkinson Sherren. (Grant Richards, 6s.)

THE author has less to relate about marriage than the title indicates, for the story primarily concerns Telson's Printing Works, their Puritan proprietor, and his two sons: the one a bully, who drives the workmen into revolt; and the other a dreamer of dreams, and in many respects an "unmitigated ass"; and, lastly, a young lady who has progressive opinions, and was born out of wedlock.

These ingredients—with illegitimacy to the fore—lead to a somewhat preten-

tious and unconvincing story in which, after quite unnecessary delay, the heroine marries the priggish younger brother. The book is redeemed by some admirable political philosophy as to the relations of master and man, and an excellent account of a contested provincial election. We question, however, the taste of introducing contemporary personages into a work of fiction, also the pen-picture of the National Liberal Club. Mr. Sherren's characters are not true to life, and his story, as a story, is dull. But his description of the printer's craft and the running of the works is evidently drawn from technical knowledge.

We presume that Mr. Sherren can and will do much better work, if only he can learn to bring his fiction up to the level of his knowledge of certain aspects of life.

This Man and this Woman. By Lady Troubridge. (Eveleigh Nash, 6s.)

HERE we have a picture of London Society of an entirely unconvincing nature. The atmosphere is correct, the speech of the characters reasonably faultless, but their deeds are unreal and indefinite. We seem to be watching a set of actors who, word-perfect and well trained, are presenting a somewhat colourless play. The majority of them have titles—which is a useful feature in the modern fiction market—but they have very little temperament. We are reminded of a phrase applied by a French art critic to a jest of Whistler's: "Une fréquentation casanière et fictive des Puissances."

Roding Rectory. By Archibald Marshall. (Stanley Paul & Co., 6s.)

LIFE in a small country town, especially as viewed in the conflicting interests of church and chapel, is Mr. Marshall's theme. He holds the balance fairly between the two, since, if his saintly Non-conformist is some way above the comfortable Rector, their wives reduce the difference. The story concerns two scandals of illegitimate birth. The introduction of the second comes on us rather suddenly more than half-way through the book, and changes the centre of interest to the rectory. Near the end a marriage, combining the rival religious interests, is in prospect, but Mr. Marshall, with the restraint of an artist, prefers to leave the proposal and acceptance to be guessed by the reader, and shifts the interest to another character.

Touches of observation and character in the book are abundant, but Mr. Marshall's deliberate methods are apt to

clog his narrative and, perhaps, to leave him insufficient room to develop his material. Thus the fortunes of the pair concerned in the first scandal are not developed, as one might expect.

Mr. Marshall has given us, at any rate, striking portraits of the hard, dissenting tradesman and of the fussy Church-woman, who is full of good works and gossip, but lacks charity.

Entertaining Jane. By Millicent Heathcote. (Mills & Boon, 6s.)

"ENTERTAINING JANE" meets the right man by accident when visiting London in search of a place as companion. Destiny, not content with depriving her of the said place, whisks her away from him and into a hydro, where she has to entertain the guests. Only after many trials and difficulties does she come into her own again, and find happiness in wedlock.

The diverse incidents and accidents are well recounted, and the atmosphere of the hydro is vividly portrayed in all its middle-class distastefulness. Emotion—or rather emotionalism—is apt to prevail, but is, on the whole, sufficiently counteracted by amusement.

Fair Haven and Foul Strand. By August Strindberg. (T. Werner Laurie, 6s.)

In the interests of Scandinavia, it is to be profoundly hoped that the unhappy men and women in this volume by August Strindberg do not by any means represent the average Swede and Norwegian. The misery they endure from their lack of one great guiding principle, and the misery they cause by their unreasoning and unreasonable sensitiveness and extraordinary egotism, must be read to be realized. Strindberg depicts happiness in married life as a vain delusion, or of so extremely perishable a nature that it never outlasts the honeymoon. The comradeship which one would expect to follow on the decay of passion between true lovers is, in his opinion, not possible between a man and a woman—it must either be hatred or love, or rather both at once. It is this constant attraction and repulsion of the sexes which gives him the theme for his argument, and with the egotistical types he selects the repulsion is the more lasting force.

There is no common ground of mutual interests, tasks, mental or moral outlook between his couples; we always see antagonistic beings united by a bond which they do not understand, and which galls them beyond endurance whenever it imposes the slightest restraint upon "the struggle of the ego for self-justification." The reason alleged by one of his characters for this wretched state of affairs is that

"the unhappiness in most marriages arises from the fact that people persuade the married pair that they will find absolute happiness in marriage, whereas happiness is not to be found in life at all."

Nor does friendship supply here any good reason for greater hopefulness. A

noteworthy fact is the hostile attitude assumed by all those who, before the marriage of a couple, were apparently good friends to them, but who, on the first hint that all was not going smoothly, turned the cold shoulder, and did not attempt to conceal their sneers. One wonders if Strindberg ever experienced from a friend of either sex the charity that hopeth and endureth all things, for no steadfast friendship or self-sacrificing love lightens the gloom of his pages.

At the same time, we must recollect that analysis, even destructive, is an instinct inbred in the Scandinavian school. Ibsen was always pulling life to pieces to see what it was made of—much as a child analyzes a watch. The results of such over-manipulation naturally invite disaster.

The Money Hunt. By Kineton Parkes. (Holden & Hardingham, 6s.)

THIS slight, chatty, but not unpleasant sketch of social life in a Midland county has but little incident or actual "movement"; we cannot, indeed, call the book a story so much as a series of sketches of various characters—a portfolio, as it were, of sketches drawn in a country house. The sketch of Lord Courtville—"undersized and overexercised," kept to a strict, dull régime of temperance and physical development by his mother and his valet—is quite good.

We are not—indeed, we do not feel that we need be—convinced, or thrilled, or "improved," but the "portfolio" is quite worth turning over during an idle hour. The author should not, however, tell us at such length exactly what wines, beers, and spirituous liquors his various personages imbibe at this or that hour of the day. It is unnecessary, and suggestive of the record of the publican's score against his clients.

Private Affairs. By Charles McEvoy. (Everett, 6s.)

THE author has selected an unconvincing theme, and the end of it brings his penalty. He "presents"—we may safely use the theatrical word—a middle-class damsel of the Further Bayswater region as leaping to fame and 40*l.* a week in a great theatre, then meeting a noble lord whom she ought to marry but does not owing to an "amourette" with his impresario.

This theatrical début is taken for granted in most airy fashion; and the love-episode with the young man is treated most casually. It is apparently quite a harmless affair, but the author leaves it open for the reader to make any inference. He might just as well have been clear on the point.

The best part of the book is the analysis of the girl's own family. This shows insight and careful study. Mr. McEvoy knows how to draw a portrait, but he takes unconscionable liberties with his

background and setting. To go back to an ancient guide, had he studied his Quintilian, particularly the passage about "dispositio et inventio," he might have produced a book worth reading and even re-reading.

Barbara & Company. By W. E. Norris. (Constable & Co., 6s.)

IN a world-weary kind of way, as of an onlooker at life and lost youth, the biographer of Barbara tells of her match-making efforts on behalf of her young friends. Barbara is an unmarried lady in society, whose own romance was spoilt in youth by the death of her lover, but whose sympathy for all lovers induces her to help on as many marriages as seem to her to be blocked by irate parents, lack of means, or misunderstandings between the interesting pair. None of the stories calls for any comment, as they are all of a commonplace description, nor does the figure of Uncle Richard, a drunken ne'er-do-well, on whom Barbara bestows both time and money, strike us as impressive.

Transition: a Psychological Romance. By Lucy Re-Bartlett. (Longmans & Co.)

THE author is happy in her treatment of perhaps the most prominent—and certainly most criticized—movement of the present day. She is delicate and restrained, and where she might have depicted only fanaticism she succeeds in maintaining an atmosphere of calm reason. She suggests in a convincing manner the spiritual force which is the driving power behind a great movement. The characters reflect her point of view, and support her condemnation of the popular idea that the disciples of extraordinary causes (Militant Suffragism in this case) are necessarily extraordinary in their daily lives. They are pictured as sane people, devoid of eccentricities, but with creeds formed by the workings of the "spirit of a new age" and the comprehension of truths not grasped by a previous generation.

The book is described as a "psychological romance." In its entirety it justifies its claim to that title, but it is to be deplored that the author occasionally lapses into phraseology reminiscent of cheap textbooks upon psychology. It is the subtle portraying of emotion, and the insight into spiritual workings which make the work "psychological," not the phrases. The author herself in the Preface forestalls the inevitable criticism of the book by saying that

"alongside of my mystical people are needed characters of a different type to bring in the necessary light and shade, and make the story seem the real life which it is."

It is a book full of stimulating food for thought, which people of varying shades of opinion will find free from offence.

TRIALS AND DEVELOPMENTS.

A Child went Forth. By Yöi Pawlowska. (Duckworth & Co., 5s. net.)

THIS is the record of a child's life and impressions, written by one who has either vivid recollections of her own childhood or a fine gift for reading the heart and mind of a child. The tale opens with the birth of Anna, a little Hungarian girl, in a remote Hungarian village. Her father and mother belonged to the ruling class, but Anna loves, and is beloved, by the peasant people. Her father wishes her to grow up fearless and steady of nerve, so has her trained as much like a boy as possible, which accords well with Anna's love of wandering and capacity for getting into scrapes. We read of life in a mountain village; the gipsy dances, fairs, and harvest festivals; visits to old women, and early days at school—all presented as they appear to a child of warm imagination and quick sympathies, with the superstition and legendary lore of a wild race at the back of her mind.

Strange customs and beliefs crop up occasionally, some of which Anna discovers to be false for herself; as, for instance, when her nurse tells her that "if one child jumps over another, the one that is jumped over will never grow." Anna puts this to the test by jumping three times in rapid succession over her baby brother, and is able to report to a sympathetic listener that her nurse was quite wrong, as John continues to grow and flourish.

A circumstance which bears witness to the love of home among these primitive people occurs when Anna is being sent away to school in England. Just as she is leaving, Maria, the cook, rushes forward and puts into Anna's hand "a very small blue linen bag. 'I forgot to give you this last night. It is Hungarian earth, to be put into your coffin in case you die in a strange land.'"

Children will enjoy this story of a Hungarian child. They will not fail to appreciate the humanity of it, as well as the simplicity of its telling.

The Anvil. By Lilith Hope. (Chapman & Hall, 6s.)

IN a book which deserves credit for the clever character-drawing of its women, and a steady march of events which do not step outside the bounds of probability, the author traces the development of Lola, a girl of mixed Spanish and English ancestry. Her beauty and talent for dancing are the means by which she hopes to gain the wealth and ease she longs for, but her coquetry and love of admiration lead her into trouble. When at last she falls in love in grim earnest, her past flirtations insist on their day of reckoning, and the cousin who has up till then befriended her feels obliged to send her back to the convent of her schooldays. Instead of returning to the care of the nuns, however, Lola asks help of a girl friend who is manageress of a school of languages in

Germany. This young woman, Bee Lamb, is outspoken in her condemnation of Lola's behaviour, but, nevertheless, invites her to come out to Berlin and earn her own living as assistant mistress.

Under Bee's sturdy and sympathetic influence Lola's better nature develops with rapid strides.

The chapters dealing with the girl's struggles against German bureaucracy are full of interest, and not less so is the recital of Lola's solitary fight for existence in Berlin after Bee leaves to be married, concluding with her dramatic escape from the snares of a White Slaver.

The contrast in the characters of Bee and Lola, both in their way sharp of tongue, but full of grit in an emergency, is well done. The villain, too, is drawn in a way which thoroughly convinces one of his meanness and vindictiveness; but, with this exception, the other masculine figures are somewhat vague in their outline, Lola's lover being little more than a dummy.

The Lily and the Rose. By G. De Vauviard. (Alston Rivers, 6s.)

THE dominating character in this story is Lesbia, an up-to-date "Lady Hamilton"—the embodiment of that lady's charming seductiveness and lack of restraint. She lives with her old mother in a tobacco shop in Long Acre. Eunice, the daughter of her unhappy early marriage with a ne'er-do-well, had been given to a strait-laced aunt to bring up. Through the death of her aunt Eunice is cast upon the world, and by an extraordinary freak of fortune finds herself reunited to her mother, whose monetary affairs are in desperate straits. To remedy this Lesbia, in partnership with a shady Count of unspeakable extraction, turns her house into a fashionable gambling saloon. The contrast between the soulless, artificial beauty and her innocent, lovable little daughter, and their intercourse with various men, who visit Lesbia from love or inquisitiveness, afford matter for a lengthy plot full of interest.

A Shameful Inheritance. By Katharine Tynan. (Cassell & Co., 6s.)

THE author can always be depended upon to make out the best possible case for an erring human being: in this instance Millie Luttrell, a young married woman who steals the sapphire necklace of a friend to pay her gambling debts.

The sympathy which the author would fain arouse for a woman who, in spite of the early picture of her heartlessness and frivolity, is later represented as a pattern of maternal devotion, is somewhat nullified by the needlessness of her self-effacement. Her friends, with the exception of her brother-in-law, were prepared to forgive and forget everything. Indeed, they appear to show an indulgence which in one respect was not entirely fortunate. One cannot escape the conviction that Millie obtained a certain amount of satisfaction out of her self-imposed

martyrdom, and that, like the majority of self-constituted martyrs, she was a coward at heart, choosing rather to select her own punishment than to bear the humiliation of forgiveness from her friends.

The Hour of Conflict. By A. Hamilton Gibbs. (Stanley Paul & Co., 6s.)

MR. GIBBS has—shall we say?—wasted a good deal of intelligent and realistic observation on an inadequate story. He has studied his characters well: they are sufficiently ably drawn, they speak and act as they should, but they do not do anything. In the words of Mr. Ravenhill:—

"Your 'ands is right and your feet is right, but your faces haint got that look of melancholy the corpse's friends 'ud look for, and the corpse 'isself 'ave a right to expect."

The story of a girl seduced, her supposed suicide, the obsession of her lover to such a point that eventually he tries to kill himself, then (finding her alive) marries her—that is very well in its way, as a story; it could easily be put into, say, ten thousand words. But the very careful study of the man and the girl and the many other characters who appear, takes away the proportion and leads us to expect more.

We mention this because it seems to us to be a deplorable tendency of to-day to leave work unfinished. The average novelist—and how vast in quantity is that average!—thinks that either a story or a study can suffice, forgets that the two should be combined. It means work—hard work in plenty, but why not face that? Novel-writing should be an art; why reduce it to a mere trick?

A Woman of To-Day. By M. L. Nutt.

MRS. NUTT's study of the temperament of a modern thinking woman is so good that we are tempted to wonder whether she has not built even better than she is aware of. We are led to think so by such phrases as "Like all men before him, he had denied woman an individual mind and soul," which shows her incapable of employing as judicial a temper when speaking of men as she does when speaking of women. Of the latter sex she depicts ably the awakening spirit, and shows how the modern woman, while capable of establishing a balance between heart and head, is still apt to have that balance rudely disturbed by very insufficient causes. We shall not attempt to give any further idea of the story but only add that all thinking readers will find much to appreciate in it.

The Maze. By A. L. Stewart. (John Long, 6s.)

IF one can accept improbability and an extra long arm of coincidence in the framework of a novel, this one will serve to while away a passing hour. It concerns the love-story of a *prima donna* who marries her protégé, a young violinist.

The inevitable clash of interests and outlook, due in this case to the mating of May and December, helps to unfold a not uninteresting story. At least the conclusion is satisfactory, if not logical. In writing of music the author's judgments appear to us to lack discrimination; for instance, we are told that "the opera 'Louise' is second to none for sheer human feeling and interest."

The Crowning Glory. By E. R. Punshon. (Hodder & Stoughton, 6s.)

THIS is mainly a delineation of three widely differing characters. Sophia Ree, a typist in a stockbroker's office, is promoted—by the author—to the position of one of the largest shareholders in a company that is "booming" rubber, to the chagrin of her employers, who are horrified at the idea of a woman achieving such eminence. But she justifies herself—even after her marriage—by plunging even more heavily on the Stock Exchange, in the hope of rivalling men in the search for millions. She succeeds, only to lose the more heavily; but her adventures and general activity of mind are interesting reading.

The second character, Gladys Hilton, her friend, is a girl with few ideas in her head, but a reputation for cleverness from her ability to speak French and German; this reputation leads her to attend Woman's Suffrage meetings. But it is no more than reputation. The real facts of life are too much for her, and she meets with one mishap after another: she is actually selling bootlaces on the Embankment, when a former lover (rejected on the score of the humdrum prospects he offered) comes to her rescue.

The third character, Sophia's twin sister Judith, plays a somewhat puzzling part, psychic and spectral; at any rate, she intervenes on one occasion in the manner of an "astral body" *ex machina*, and thereby prevents a tragedy. The author leaves all solution and explanation to the reader, but does certainly succeed in conveying the impression of the atmosphere in which he is dealing.

The three girl characters are adequately portrayed; but we are left to wonder how far "The Crowning Glory" is supposed to have been achieved by each of them.

Rose of Old Harpeth. By Maria Thompson Davies. (R.T.S., 6s.)

A SIMPLE, unambitious story of a college girl who forgoes prospects and ambition to return to an American old-world settlement occupied chiefly by her aged relatives, most of whom are in financial straits. An eleventh-hour rescue of the old folk from ruin by a young mining surveyor introduces a charming love-story.

The author has not striven after elaboration of effects. The simple, unenterprising end which she set out to attain she has achieved, and she has succeeded in investing the story with homely humour and sentiment.

Broke of Covenen. By J. C. Snaith. (Constable & Co., 6s.)

WHATEVER of excision or of addition has gone to the reissuing of this work, which was first published in 1906, we have no hesitation in acclaiming its appearance. Unless it has been much remodelled, we should say it is more in date to-day than it ever was before, recording as it does the life-story of a Victorian squire who was a human survival of feudalism and whom Fate had to break because he would not bend. We must at once recommend any reader to reserve all but the first page of the Preface for after-consumption—if consume it he or she must. If the Olympian gods did laugh, as the author suggests, at the tragedy that came of a man failing to recognize the mutability of earthly things, then they were not so much worth scaring as are Shavian audiences. Even human creatures are learning that to sneer is the mark of a degradation far below the level of the four-footed animal, while sympathy is an attribute of the highest. But enough of the Preface! it is the book that matters.

It is not too much to say that in far-off days students in search of records dealing with what is particularly a transitional period—the early twentieth century—will read this book with at least some of the gusto with which we to-day turn back to Dickens. It would take us far too long to note in detail the many things to which our appreciation is due, but we must remark on the author's intuitive faculty for appreciating human frailties and the grandeur which refuses submission so long. Since the picture of the old industrial order in Mr. Galsworthy's 'Strife' we have had no such portrait of a social survival. The breaking away from the squire of his son and youngest daughter, and the staunch support of his remaining four daughter retainers, are admirable. Best of all is the delineation of the wife, though a woman so sane as to value power "less as a mere possession than for what it could do," might get beyond the verdict, "If ever women cease to be patient then will perish the only hope remaining to the world." The ending, we regret to say, is given up to mere sentimentalism, and the last chapters, with the Preface, make the novel over long.

Johnnie Maddison. By John Haslette. (Smith, Elder & Co., 6s.)

IT was fortunate for Molly Hatherell, the heroine of this romance, that her wedding was twice postponed, as the first delay was not sufficient to open her eyes to the true character of her lukewarm lover. The problem which faced her friends was whether or not it was their duty to enlighten her on the subject of his gambling propensities; but with one exception they decided to conceal it, in the hope that matrimony would work his reformation. The one man whose anxiety for her future happiness conquers his reluctance to "split" on a comrade is Johnnie Maddison, a character-sketch on which the author has bestowed great care, with good results. Complications are

introduced by the fact that Maddison also loves the girl, and realizes that his motives are likely to be misconstrued. As might have been expected, Molly indignantly refuses to hear anything against her lover, and not till he is convicted of misappropriating his employer's money to pay his debts is the truth forced home upon her.

With Johnnie's assistance the defaulter escapes, both from the police and from the hands of enemies who have a grudge to settle with him, and who thereupon wreak their revenge on Maddison for his interference with their plans. As may be surmised, the conclusion holds out hope of a third attempt at a wedding, with a change of bridegroom.

Though Mr. Haslette has not attempted anything very ambitious in 'Johnnie Maddison,' he has successfully drawn a group of pleasant portraits, and given a reasonable air to the incidents connected with them. The plot is laid among the plateaux of South America, amid an atmosphere of mule-tracks, adobe huts, scrub, and mountain scenery.

ROMANCE AND FANCY.

The Lost Tribes. By George A. Birmingham. (Smith, Elder & Co., 6s.)

IT is part of the author's satire against the commonly conceived nature of the Irish to present them in his books as intensely serious in character, incapable of seeing the humorous side of the well-meaning reformer whose blundering schemes usually form the subject-matter of his novels.

The reformer in this case is an American widow, who comes over to Ireland with the intention of making acquaintance with some relatives of her husband, and unearthing if possible some data for his belief that Ireland is the home of the Lost Tribes of Israel.

She finds a brother-in-law and a niece in the peaceful, not to say indolent village of Druminawona, and her first sight of some of the inhabitants confirms her in her suppositions about their Israelitish descent. Her plan for "speeding up" Druminawona takes the form of an endeavour to get up a Miracle play, a scheme in which she enlists the unwilling support of her easygoing brother-in-law, Mervyn, and the parish priest, Father Roche, who thinks he sees in it a way of inducing some much-needed dollars to pour into the village.

As her plans unfold, both clergymen get alarmed at the thought of what their bishops will say, and endeavour by many laughable expedients to divert her mind, but without much success. At last, the energetic widow herself begins to see the hopelessness of trying to instil energy into a nation of such born "slackers," and devotes her attention instead to the matrimonial future of Delia, her niece, the results in this case amply rewarding her efforts.

The matter-of-fact love-affairs of Onny Delia's handmaiden should dispel any

lingering illusions as to the romantic mysticism which many consider the natural heritage of the untutored Celt. George A. Birmingham's way of making fun of such believers is so genial and good-natured that they will not be able to refrain from joining in the laugh against themselves.

Madcap. By George Gibb. (Appletons.)

MR. GIBB traces the transition of an American—Dollar Girl, shall we say?—from the wearisome complexity of wealthy life to the simplicity of Nature, Arcadian journeys and doings and feelings. She meets with the one man who offers this entire change from her life. The difference, and the excellence of it, are brought home to her in the gay surroundings of New York, in the Eure and Oise country-side, and finally in New York the city, and she chooses his life in preference to the fevered luxury that seemed to be her normal destiny.

Mr. Gibb is an artist in every way. His characters are consistent in their speech and action, and his descriptions are admirable. In a few strokes he gives the feeling that a sunset or a charming aspect of wood or field or river can inspire in an acute and sympathetic observer.

But, the whole book through, we feel that we are reading an idyll, not a story of life. We cannot visualize without a twinge the casual, idle life—"amateur," even in its most strenuous moments—of these overwhelmingly wealthy and luxurious personages. Hermia, the "mad-cap" heroine, may well find delight and rest in her pastoral tour; it is simply a question of momentary dissatisfaction with her other life, a sense of the fascinating novelty of simple surroundings.

Her emotions, and the emotions of the other characters as they occur, are as the fine robes that an actor puts on, wears with conviction on the boards, and doffs without a sigh. People in that position can so easily afford to have whatever emotions they like, glad or sad; but the recital of these only serves to mark the difference between emotion and feeling, between life as it is lived and life worth the living—or else life that has to be lived. It is as though we listened to the loves and losses of a butterfly.

Much as we may admire Mr. Gibb's realism, we cannot but contrast its picturesque light-heartedness with the many sterner pictures this world offers of reality.

Maria. By Baroness von Hutten. (Hutchinson & Co., 6s.)

THIS book may, perhaps, be also called idyllic; at least, it is a study of the improbable, so coloured as to resemble possibility. The Anglo-German prince who loves a fair maiden (like King Cophetua, except that she is not a beggar), and is forced to renounce her by the exigencies of high politics that bestow upon him the crown of Sarmania, has figured many times in fiction. More actuality is essayed in the portrayal of her father, beloved of

many famous poets and great men, and whose are called by their real names.

The various situations and developments are well carried off, because Baroness von Hutten possesses excellent technique: she is a practised writer, and knows how to make her characters talk and behave. She has a keen eye for the avoidance of solecisms and barbarisms, and a fluent pen for episodes humorous or impressive, likewise an expert sense of social atmosphere. But her technique is, as a rule, too apparent; there is too much evidence of plan and purpose in the book, and so the story itself fails on the whole to convince us.

Cap'n Dan's Daughter. By Joseph C. Lincoln. (Appletons, 6s.)

'CAP'N DAN'S DAUGHTER' is one of those pleasant, detached romances in which some American writers are such adepts. Cap'n Dan, a retired seafaring man of simple tastes, inherits a fine legacy, and his wife's social ambitions involve him in all the discomfort of a sojourn in a large town. The eventual disillusion that sends her and him back to the seaside village where they had lived for many contented years is well worked out, and the many characters who play their parts therein are drawn with a light and agreeable touch and with evident accuracy. The result is an amusing picture of certain phases of American life, town and provincial.

A Gamble for Love. By Nat Gould. (John Long, 6s.)

NAT GOULD is the Dumas Père of the race-course—for quantity, if not for quality of production. He has his own recipe, as for this or that world-renowned sauce, "borne with the British flag through distant lands," and the result is very much the same. A beauteous lady, millions of money, a virtuous young racing man, one or two villains, and, of course, a menagerie full of race-horses, are the ingredients to be mixed and served.

There are bad people, unduly æsthetic in their tastes, who would substitute for "serve" Edward Lear's "throw out of the window"; but, after all, Nat Gould is always thoroughly healthy reading, and he certainly knows how to describe a race. Here he gives us four, which is good measure; but in other respects he is tamer than usual: the villains do not really do anything. They ought to have carried off the lovely lady, drugged the hero, and "nobbled" at least two race-horses: if we are to have excitement, let us have it in abundance. Mr. Gould does not give us our money's worth.

Under the Incense Trees. By Cecil Adair. (Stanley Paul & Co., 6s.)

THOSE who have a taste for Ouida—stripped of incident or impossibilities, toned down to a mere continuity of flid description and talk—may find some pleasure in Mr. Adair's work. His characters and their achievements—their talk

of achievements, rather—are as tame as can be. Mr. Adair is a devout follower of the rule "ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet," and the consequence is an unchanging presentment of "rapture—by threes!" as soft as anything Kate Nickleby ever read to Mrs. Witittrly.

Mr. Adair has a sense of style and a command of language and image. Why does he not make more use of these? He might have saved the book, made it readable, and even interesting. Even a few "Ouida-esque" absurdities would have been welcome as foil to the languid idealism relentlessly imposed and adhered to throughout.

Cloudesley Tempest. By E. H. Lacon Watson. (John Murray, 6s.)

WE do not, of course, really approve of a careless, lazy young man who gets out of one scrape into another, and in the end congratulates himself that, had it not been for these scrapes, he would not have married a beautiful maiden and obtained a fortune. But we do like to read about him, especially when the tale is told as breezily as the present is.

Neither do we approve of a sweet girl and a beautiful-minded widow giving themselves so much trouble over the said scapegrace—still, they all obtained ultimate happiness, and we have had a lot of pleasure in reading of how they did so and no novel really needs more justification.

STORIES OF THE OUTLANDS.

A Daughter of Debate. By Mrs. Ambrose Harding. (Werner Laurie, 6s.)

THE "Daughter of Debate" is one Alice Ashton, niece of the administrator of Dominica. She justifies the title applied to her on the score of her zeal for improving and raising the natives. This zeal, so the author assures us, Alice possesses; and her general conversation seems to support the view, in the absence of other evidence. A similar vagueness is apparent in the "rendering" of Dr. Hampton, the ambitious native who engineers a rebellion: he does not seem quite to know his own mind. Mrs. Harding is ill-served by the characters she creates. Her own criticisms of the native mind are interesting and often illuminating, but the discourses thereon which she puts into the mouths of the various personages who are supposed to interpret her views are pedantic in the extreme, redolent of the worst clichés of the platform speaker, more wearisome than the most ample periods of a Government report.

Had she cultivated dialogue as it is really spoken, and characterization of people who, if imaginary, might just as well be realistic as not, Mrs. Harding might have given us a readable and convincing book; for her views and sentiments are sane and dignified in themselves, and her observation in some cases is not without depth. The character of Zillah, for example, is life-like and reasonable.

Home. By Anon. (Fisher Unwin, 6s.)

ILL-JUDGED marriages are not easily handled without fatal lapses into melodrama; those who avoid such lapses merit praise, as does the anonymous writer in the present case.

The young couple here depicted find out their mistake after two years: the wife sets forth to join a friend of her husband who has captured her affections. She changes her mind, however, and returns, only to find her home deserted. Her husband has gone away and left no trace.

We find him again, in Brazil, married to a girl he meets there. His wife's lover appears on the scene, and recounts the tragedy of the home broken up. But the husband's new home is also broken up by a sudden flood. He returns after many wanderings to his wife and first love, and the two begin life afresh.

The lover is also changed by illness and much roving through distant lands, and he also seeks and finds peace in home-life and the love that comes into it.

The story, if occasionally somewhat strong to the taste, shows knowledge and study of human nature. As a first novel, it is worthy of high commendation.

SOUTH AFRICA.

The Black Peril. By George Webb Hardy. (Holden & Hardingham, 6s.)

MR. HARDY went to South Africa to investigate a problem which statesmen both at home and in the dominions must soon learn to regard as vital, and calling for the most scientific treatment. The relations between the black and white races are outlined and dissected by him in plain and outspoken words. He describes, with knowledge drawn from actual experience on the spot, the atmosphere of an illimitable land highly charged with racial passions and prejudices, where savage nature still dwarfs civilization, and primitive man is in conflict with ordered progress. How this problem of the mingling of white with black is to be solved the author does not tell us; he portrays the evils, but does not present a comprehensive solution for them.

In any case, he has contributed to the discussion of this weighty matter much useful knowledge and insight, which is likely to be valuable in directing attention to a problem that politicians both in England and the Colonies apparently prefer to ignore. The Bishop of Oxford in a recent speech indicated, perhaps correctly, the attitude of our legislators towards the colour problem:—

"Statesmen are afraid. They do not know what to make of the Black Peril, and the Nationalist movement in China, India, and Africa. They cannot repudiate it. Where is it going to lead to? What is it going to mean?"

Mr. Hardy is of opinion that any fusion between black and white races is an impossible ideal, but he makes it clear that it is the European who has created the problem and is responsible for its

solution. He considers with reticence and restraint one phase of the racial question that may be new to those who have not lived abroad, but is tragically familiar to the man on the spot.

Mr. Hardy has made, we think, a mistake in adopting fiction as the framework for information that has quite sufficient interest in itself.

The Toll. By William Westrup. (Hurst & Blackett, 6s.)

MR. WESTRUP gives such a picture of mining life in South Africa as may well make those interested therein pause and consider whether the gold extracted is worth the heavy toll on human life.

Below ground the white man is confronted with the ever-present fear of phthisis. Once its grip is on him he must abandon his work instantly or succumb to the disease: few have the courage to make such sacrifice of their material prospects. For the native miner pneumonia is an equally deadly foe. Life is of so little account that no note is taken of the many victims.

Above ground is a mere waste blighted by the blinding white dust from the mines; here and there are the rough dwellings of the miners. Only in the drinking saloons is some semblance of the Life Social. Men laugh and swear with the seal of death set clear for all to read upon their faces. Who will be taken next? But what matters that? A man cannot choose or forsake his job when starvation pushes him on.

Nor is sickness the only agent of starvation. The Labour Unions exact blind obedience, and the Union leaders are ready to call out their men without thought of the consequences: the dignity of labour being considered of more importance than the death of the labourer.

A love-story woven into this gloomy texture gives a few moments of brightness; but here also tragedy supervenes, and the dread phthisis ruins the home and slays the two who have fought for it so hard.

A lighter vein is struck in the picture of a Johannesburg Jew money-lender and his two witty and fascinating daughters. But that is a mere episode in the sadness and pity of the whole.

Mr. Westrup has written a powerful book. His descriptive force and realism bring home to us the fateful greed of the mines and the cost of the treasures they yield so hardly.

HISTORY AND ADVENTURE.

A Lad of Kent. By Herbert Harrison. (Macmillan & Co., 6s.)

MR. HARRISON has chosen as his scene Folkestone; as his period the days between Trafalgar and Waterloo, when the French *chasse-marée*, the Revenue cutter, and the smugglers' luggers ranged the Channel, and the press-gang infested the coast towns.

He supplies full measure of adventures, both serious and comic, deftly inter-

mingled, and he introduces to us a variegated crowd of most life-like and interesting personages, who play vivid parts in a vivid and convincing manner. The youth who is the centre-piece of the story is, perforce, more colourless than his fellows, in that he is made to speak in the first person—a guarantee, by the way, that he is destined to emerge safely from his many perils and trials. His companion, Monty, precocious in speech but resourceful in action, is a most pleasant individual, and their pompous preceptor, Mr. Farmiloe, *alias* "Whiskers," is an excellent character both in himself and in his portraiture.

Mr. Harrison is happy in his avoidance of the self-conscious and stilted heroics that so often characterize the style of "adventure" stories. Every one talks quite naturally, and many a good saying is hit out, like the sparks from flints, in the contact of the lowly, but keen wits of the sea-coast folk. We select the phrase about William's beloved trumpet for the use of those who are plagued by amateur lovers of that instrument: "When you blows upon it, 'tis like to nothing else on earth than the grandfather of Balaam's ass braying before a thunderstorm. Out you go!" We congratulate the author on an excellent and stirring tale of a most interesting epoch.

Rung Ho! By Talbot Mundy. (Cassell & Co., 6s.)

THIS is an exciting story of Indian life, the action of which takes place in Rajputana at the time of the Mutiny. The author does not neglect any of the opportunities so dramatic a period offers for adventure. The main attraction is the plot, not the delineation of character. The narrative is not happy in the opening chapters, but once well started it never loses coherency and interest. However widely scattered the characters, their actions are never irrelevant to the main issue, and the whole is worked out to a satisfying and probable conclusion.

While characterization is not the chief merit of the book, the people are sufficiently alive and real to play their parts. The heroine is the least successful portrait; we are not told enough about her. She is the daughter of a Scotch missionary stationed in Howrah City, and to perform the part allotted to her she must have possessed a character worth describing. The rest are just such as are essential to a vigorous romance of the East. The virility and determination of the hero suggests a Kipling creation, and, indeed, the whole book breathes a Kipling atmosphere.

Snake and Sword. By P. C. Wren. (Longmans & Co., 6s.)

'SNAKE AND SWORD' is really quite as thrilling a tale as the name suggests. The snake and the sword form two antagonistic forces in the personality of the hero, who rejoices in the somewhat ominous, but appropriate name of Damocles, commonly called "Dam." The sight of a

snake affects him so strongly that he falls into a state of abject terror, and is, in fact, for the time being practically mad. Fortunately, Dam has a saving grace in the shape of a hereditary tendency to courage—if we may so describe it. The fear of the snake is due to pre-natal influence, and the plot turns on the war waged between this latter and the hereditary courage.

The story—almost startling in its abruptness—opens in India, where we find the father of the hero, Col. de Warrenne, pinning his Victoria Cross to the night-dress of his dying wife. Without delay we are whisked off to England, where we are introduced in due course to the heroine. Lucille is boyish, slangy, and charming; in fact, an altogether likeable young lady. The chapters dealing with the childhood of Dam and Lucille are full of a delightful humour which is almost reminiscent of 'Stalky & Co.' The book is rich in a variety of incident, and it is difficult to say whether Mr. Wren excels most in describing a small boy who is exceedingly "cheeky" to an old and serious-minded gardener, a love-scene between two up-to-date young people, or a boxing match between an artillery corporal and a trooper. Concerning this match, Mr. Wren is quite mistaken in labelling it "Of no interest to Women nor Modern civilized Men." There is not a chapter in the book which is lacking in interest either to one or the other.

SHORT STORIES.

Dubliners. By James Joyce. (Grant Richards, 3s. 6d.)

MR. GEORGE MOORE says in his 'Confessions,' if our memory does not deceive us, that when he and a certain French writer are dead no more "naturalistic" novels will be written. Whether this is one of his characteristic outbursts of candour as to his and his friend's abilities, or merely a statement to the effect that novelists as a whole have no taste for such writing, we need not discuss. But we can frankly say that Mr. Joyce's work affords a distinct contradiction of the saying.

The fifteen short stories here given under the collective title of 'Dubliners' are nothing if not naturalistic. In some ways, indeed, they are unduly so: at least three would have been better buried in oblivion. Life has so much that is beautiful, interesting, educative, amusing, that we do not readily pardon those who insist upon its more sordid and baser aspects. The condemnation is the greater if their skill is of any high degree, since in that case they might use it to better purpose.

Mr. Joyce undoubtedly possesses great skill both of observation and of technique. He has humour, as is shown by the sketch of Mrs. Kearney and her views on religion, her faith "bounded by her kitchen, but if she was put to it, she could believe also in the banshee and in the Holy Ghost." He has also knowledge of the beauty of words, of mental landscapes (if we may use such

a phrase): the last page of the final story is full evidence thereto. His characterization is exact: speaking with reserve as to the conditions of certain sides of the social life of Dublin, we should say that it is beyond criticism. All the personages are living realities.

But Mr. Joyce has his own specialized outlook on life—on that life in particular; and here we may, perhaps, find the explanation of much that displeases and that puzzles us. That outlook is evidently sombre: he is struck by certain types, certain scenes, by the dark shadows of a low street or the lurid flare of an ignoble tavern, and he reproduces these in crude, strong sketches scarcely relieved by the least touch of joy or repose. Again, his outlook is self-centred, absorbed in itself rather; he ends his sketch abruptly time after time, satisfied with what he has done, brushing aside any intention of explaining what is set down or supplementing what is omitted.

All the stories are worth reading for the work that is in them, for the pictures they present; the best are undoubtedly the last four, especially 'Ivy Day in the Committee Room.' The last of all, 'The Dead,' far longer than the rest, and tinged with a softer tone of pathos and sympathy, leads us to hope that Mr. Joyce may attempt larger and broader work, in which the necessity of asserting the proportions of life may compel him to enlarge his outlook and eliminate such scenes and details as can only shock, without in any useful way impressing or elevating, the reader.

Quick Action. By Robert W. Chambers. (Appletons, 6s.)

MR. CHAMBERS seems to have set himself the task of making the highly improbable appear not only possible, but perfectly usual. He strings together a series of tales which have love at first sight as their common denominator. But not content with such "quick action," he goes on to make his couples confess their feelings within a few minutes of their meeting, and marries them right off with lightning-like celerity. The different stories are told by a crystal-gazer to a group of her admirers as being truthful accounts of what she sees happening in the crystal. Each story as it is related is well picked to pieces by her audience, which makes us suppose that Mr. Chambers is in reality satirizing modern American fiction. The love-affairs are all staged in Florida, and the tropical setting is so brilliant that it conveys an atmosphere of fairyland where the incredible is the normal.

We select as one of the most amusing the story of George Z. Green, who, within ten minutes of complaining that he had never encountered the romance that novelists were always describing, becomes deeply interested in an unknown girl whom he sees in tears leaving the house of a clairvoyante.

The book contains numerous attractive illustrations in pen and ink by Mr. Edmund Frederick.

The Mercy of the Lord. By Flora Annie Steel. (Heinemann, 6s.)

THIS is not a novel, but a collection of twenty-four short tales, the first of which supplies the entire title. Once again Mrs. Steel is on Indian ground, and gives us an abundant sense of Oriental atmosphere, and of the contrasts between the native mind and that of the dominant alien race. She has also the rare quality of taking us out of humdrum civilization into a region where time and reality seem mere conventions.

The best of the stories—those dealing with Indian servants are all admirable—are first-rate, but some will be difficult for the ordinary reader to understand, and the critic will note that Mrs. Steel does not always work with that economy of material which the short story at its best demands. Her transitions are abrupt, and her style is occasionally careless. The second sentence in the book reads thus:—

"The cause of which being an equally transient admiration for a good little Eurasian girl fresh from her convent."

We must protest against such English as this, particularly since Mrs. Steel has no need to attempt vividness in this cheap way. She makes, it may be noted, no concessions to popular sentimentalism. More than one of her stories represents death as the mercy of the Lord.

CRIMES AND MYSTERIES.

Quella. By Geoffrey Norton Farmer. (Alston Rivers, 6s.)

SIGNOR QUELLA discovers a drug that has so lasting and pernicious a hold over all who taste it as to enslave them for life to his will. He creates a vast organization whereby this drug, disseminated through the world in the food of restaurants and hotels, is to render him absolute master of the globe. For what purpose the author does not explain.

Reginald Carr, the hero of the tale, finds an antidote only to lose it, but matters are set right by the death of Quella and the destruction of his stores of the drug.

The idea is certainly ingenious and original, and Mr. Farmer has made of it a spirited story. But it can only be taken as a species of extravaganza—of much the same nature as Sir A. Conan Doyle's 'Lost World.' Indeed, the notion occurred to us while reading—and we present it for what it is worth to both authors—that a collaboration might have been very effective. Sir A. Conan Doyle's wild beasts and Mr. Farmer's wild drug might have been happily combined: you invent your tableland and your pre- (or post-) historic animals to live thereon, and, when you or your readers are tired of them, you relegate them deftly to the scrap-heap by means of your patent new poison.

The Best Man. By Grace Livingstone Hill Lutz. (J. B. Lippincott Co.)

THIS is a book which may well serve to while away the tedium of a long railway journey, but those into whose hands it falls must not imagine they are going to read a conventional detective story. The author exhibits as great a contempt for the commonplace as she does for the probable. The surprising adventures of her hero, a young and energetic member of the Secret Service Staff in Washington, succeed each other with the feverish rapidity of a "thrilling" and complex cinematograph play.

In disgrace, and hotly pursued by a combination of swell mobsmen from whom he has recovered a stolen Government document "of national importance," the hapless youth finds himself at the door of a church. He is promptly dragged inside, and while under the impression that he is being mistaken for the best man he is, *malgré lui*, married to a charming lady. The wedding party take him for the real bridegroom, who, however, does not appear until long after the conclusion of the ceremony. This is naturally a prelude to further exciting episodes, and an imbroglio which is not unravelled until the final chapter.

Notwithstanding its manifest absurdity, the story is amusing, but it would be more so were it not over-charged with a sentimentality which suggests that the author wishes to be taken seriously.

Conscience Money. By Sidney Warwick. (Greening & Co., 6s.)

MR. WARWICK piles on the agony—gives us murder, diamond robbery, swell mobsmen, "fences," aeroplanes, secret passages, in fact everything he can think of to ensure mystery and horror. He is quite as successful as need be in his efforts. The story moves rapidly from one thrill to another, and holds the attention throughout. It should suit the cinematograph-goer quite well—better, perhaps, than the reader: the whole book would readily fall into the necessary successive scenes—"reels," we believe, is the correct term. Indeed, the actions of the various personages are far better than their speech, and so the effect of the whole, depicted on the film, should be distinctly telling.

Fallen Among Thieves. By Arthur Applin. (Ward, Lock & Co., 6s.)

WE might call Mr. Applin's sensations social rather than criminal. He takes us into high circles and a fashionable atmosphere. The motive of the story is the control acquired by a blackmailing thief over a weak girl. By means of subtle drugs he makes his victim steal various jewels. At the last he is found out, and the girl is rescued from his clutches by the hero, who duly marries her.

Except for its sensations, the book is of no particular value; the writing is conventional and casual and loose in style. Why should the author say

"forbode" instead of foreboded; "fait vos jeux" instead of *faites votre jeu*? And why talk about a waiter "mixing" drinks? That expression, beloved of many a lady novelist, does so inevitably suggest that sugar or powder or something is poured into the whisky and soda and then stirred with a spoon.

The Lost Parchment. By Fergus Hume. (Ward, Lock & Co., 6s.)

A SCHOOLBOY reading the title and the name of the author will surely exclaim "Good old Fergus Hume; more hansom cabs!" He will be quite correct in his attitude, for Mr. Hume has given us just what might be expected.

We have no hansom cabs in the book—only one motor-car; but that car manages to slay the villain in the last act. We have a will that disinherits the righteous hero, but is proved to be a forgery executed by the erring clergyman antiquary; and we have the beauteous damsel who cleaves to her beloved in spite of all the world may say. In fact, there are all the elements of the "good old" mystery-sensation tale.

It is quite a good story of its kind, conventional enough in style and in the speech of the characters, but never dragging in its movement. Nor is the mystery unnecessarily obscure or complex, as is sometimes the case in such tales. Suspicion falls, like Mr. Punch's stick, on the shoulders of almost all the characters, one after the other, but everything is cleared up at the end, and the final scene is "according to Cocker." Mr. Fergus Hume is sure to find many interested readers.

Anybody but Anne. By Carolyn Wells. (J. B. Lippincott Company, 6s.)

THIS is an American detective story, in which we are introduced to Fleming Stone, who is called in to disentangle the mystery of a murder which has baffled the efforts of all others to find the culprit. The finger of suspicion points at various people in turn, but each of them proves his innocence. At last the criminal is traced, and all ends in the usual happy and conventional manner. Miss Wells has written a capital story, and has displayed considerable skill in sustaining the interest until the climax is revealed.

The Opal Pin. By Rufus Gillmore. (Appletons, 6s.)

OF the two male protagonists one has a title thrust upon him, the other assumes it, and is found out at the end. Jewels are stolen off and on throughout the book, but apparently are restored to their owners; at any rate, no cases ever come into court. Also an opal pin, bearing ill-luck with it, makes fitful appearances.

The book is slight and not particularly probable or realistic. It might in better hands have been made into a good mystery-story, and the opal pin into a fine centre-piece. The main figures attempt to be life-like, but do not succeed; had they been

more melodramatic or even shadowy, with the addition of a "sleuth-hound" or two, the result would have been much more striking and the atmosphere of the "detective" story far more evident.

JUVENILE.

The Tale of Lal. By Raymond Paton. (Chapman & Hall, 6s.)

THE author has made out a distinctly good scheme for an extravaganza to please the taste of the young. He brings to life one of the lions of Trafalgar Square—a benevolent lion who arranges historical pageants and fairy scenes for the benefit of two children. He then introduces a writer ("a nawthor," as Kipps would have said), and the said writer's patron, a lord mayor, and brings them into relation with the lion, likewise the Temple Bar griffin. Finally he introduces a lawsuit in which all the characters appear, after the manner of the classic trial in "Alice in Wonderland."

To our thinking—though, perhaps, very young readers may take a different view—the book is spoilt by its unrelieved and pedantic jocosity. The humour is too intentional, obvious, and heavy. We see "For Children Only" written in large letters on every page. We may (as we suggest) be totally wrong in our view, but we seem to remember the unalloyed delight of sundry versions of Grimm, Hans Andersen, Struwwelpeter, not to mention Lewis Carroll's two masterpieces, wherein the humour is absolutely spontaneous when present, and is never worked up specially for the occasion by those "juvenile" phrases that only occur to a certain type of ultra-grown-up mind. We cannot but think that Mr. Paton might have produced a far more fascinating book if he had spared some of the labour which is evident all through.

By the way, Mr. Paton, when explaining (in the lawsuit scene) the component elements of "dogsnose," ought to have remembered how perfectly it has been defined by a great master of fiction: "Warm porter, moist sugar, gin, and nutmeg (a groan, and 'So it is,' from an elderly female)." Was there any need to improve upon Dickens? For that matter, was there any need for the lawsuit scene at all? It is unreal and rather dull.

A Boy's Adventures in the South Seas. By Frank Elias. (R.T.S., 2s.)

THE young hero of this story has plenty of adventures, clearly and reasonably chronicled; and the whole is sufficiently free from the didactic or sermonizing touch. But somehow the book as a whole fails to thrill, and there is a woeful absence of real movement, of that tense atmosphere which alone can carry off such a recital. Boys brought up on Stevenson or even Henty will hardly be roused to enthusiasm, we fear, by Mr. Elias.